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MYTHOLOGY AND FOLKTALES
THEIR RELATION AND INTERPRETATION

by
E. S. HARTLAND

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MYTHOLOGY AND FOLKTALES:

THEIR RELATION AND THEIR INTERPRETATION.

In a little book, often talked about but not often read, on *The Wisdom of the Ancients*, by Francis Bacon, there is a noble passage which runs thus:—

“Above all things this prevails most with me, and is of singular moment—that many of these fables seem not to be invented of those by whom they are related and celebrated, as by Homer, Hesiod, and others: for if it were so that they took beginning in that age and from those authors by whom they are delivered and brought to our hands, my mind gives me there could be no great or high matter expected or supposed to proceed from them in respect of these originals. But if with attention we consider the matter, it will appear that they were delivered and related as things formerly believed and received, and not as newly invented and offered unto us. Besides, seeing they are diversely related by writers that lived near about one and the self-same time, we



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may easily perceive that they were common things, derived from precedent memorials, and that they became various by reason of the diverse ornaments bestowed on them by particular relations. And the consideration of this must needs increase in us a great opinion of them, as not to be accounted either the effects of the times or inventions of the poets, but as sacred relics or abstracted airs of better times, which by tradition from more ancient nations fell into the trumpets and flutes of the Greeks."

So the great thinker puts the argument for the traditional origin of the mythological tales he is about to expound as philosophical, moral, and political apoloques. Since his day we have learnt that stories of the same general characteristics as those of the Greeks are known to almost all nations throughout the world. The Zulus and the Maoris, for example, who had no system of writing, tell stories which, if we make allowance for difference of customs and environment, are startling in their likeness to some of the classical stories. In fact, of all human accomplishments, perhaps the most persistent and the most widely diffused is the art of telling tales. Among peoples to whom books and newspapers are unknown, the telling of tales is the only method of transmitting the memory of the past, and it occupies a large part of their leisure hours. As an example take

the Bantu tribes of South Africa. "When men gather round the hut-fire in the evening, the story-teller is always in requisition. He may relate his own exploits, his deeds of daring, his loves, his thefts, and feats of strength or endurance, and from these wander into a region of fable or legend to wile the weary hours away. With some, story-telling is reduced to one of the fine arts—I had almost said exact sciences."¹ What is true of the Bantu is equally true of the Eskimo. In the long winter nights around the shores of Hudson's Bay, or during inclement weather when they cannot venture out, they sit in the hut, and the old men relate what they have seen and heard. They have a great stock of stories; and "the old women relate the history of the people of former days, depending entirely on memory, often interspersed with recitations apparently foreign to the thread of the legend. The younger members sit with staring eyes and countenances which show their wondering interest in the narration. Far into the night the droning tone of [the speaker's] voice continues reciting the events of the past, until one by one the listeners drowsily drop to sleep in the position they last assumed."² Turning to a higher grade of civilisa-

¹ Rev. James Macdonald, in *Folklore*, vol. iii. p. 352.

² *Eleventh Report of the Bureau of Ethnology*, Washington, 1897, pp. 260, 327.

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tion, we find similar examples in our own country. Gervase of Tilbury, Marshal of the kingdom of Arles, was an Englishman who, early in the thirteenth century, wrote a miscellaneous work under the name of *Otia Imperialia* to amuse the vacant hours of the Emperor Otho IV. He records that it was the custom in England for the family of a rich man to gather round the fire after supper that they might spend their leisure in recounting the deeds of the ancients and in listening. On one such occasion a guest was present, and in the course of the evening the people of the place related a wonder said to occur at or near Cambridge. There, on a hill called Wandlebury, seems to have been a prehistoric camp. If after nightfall, when the moon was shining, an armed man, entering alone within the rampart, were to exclaim "Let a knight come against a knight!" it was said that instantly a horseman would prick forth against him, and one or the other would be hurled to the ground. The guest was fired with the wish to go and try his luck, but how he succeeded does not now concern us.¹ What does concern us is the wide interpretation put on "the deeds of the ancients." The custom, it is clear, was one of telling marvellous tales to which more or less credence was attached. This is a custom

¹ Gerv. Tilb., Dec. 3, c. 59. The story was copied into the *Gesta Romanorum*, c. 155.

which would be very hard to kill. While books were none or rare, it would be among the chief amusements of the castle as well as of the cottage; and among the peasantry in remote country districts, even in this island, it is hardly yet unknown. At all events, long since the beginning of the century now passing away, in Wales and in Scotland gatherings of neighbours at one another's firesides on winter evenings to hear and to tell old tales were very common; and I need hardly say that the testimony of observers in all parts of Europe is the same.

I have referred to the stories thus told as betraying the same general characteristics as the mythological tales of the ancient Greeks. Everywhere they deal in wonders. Everywhere they deal with personages having powers that we in a higher level of education recognise as beyond human. Everywhere they tell us of monsters which make war, sometimes habitually, sometimes in desultory fashion, upon mankind. And the lower we go in civilisation the more frequently we find incidents indicating a morality and customs different from ours. The problem Bacon sets himself to solve is—what do they mean? "In such tales as are probable," he says, "they may seem to be invented for delight and in imitation of history. And as for such as no man would so much as imagine or relate, they seem to be sought

out for other ends." Concerning these, he is "inclined to imagine that, under some of the ancient fictions, lay couched certain mysteries and allegories, even from their first invention." And he is persuaded "that no man can constantly deny but this sense was in the authors' intent and meaning when they first invented them, and that they purposely shadowed it in this sort."

In Bacon's time there was much to be said for the solution he propounds. With our extended knowledge of the world, however, it has long since become unsatisfactory. We have learnt "that allegories are always adventitiously, and, as it were, by constraint, never naturally and properly, included in fables" (that is to say, in these traditional tales)—a contention he describes as "lumpish and almost leaden." What is of still more importance, we have discovered that, if you want to know the meaning of anything whatever, you must go back to its origin. Lastly, Bacon himself has put into our hands an instrument of philosophical inquiry keener and more potent than any that was known before: the method of induction. He had not the means of applying this method to the Greek fables, or it would have led him to very different results.

There are, no doubt, many traditional stories which may be read as allegories of one kind or another. The dangers of navigation between

Scylla and Charybdis, and the misfortune of Icarus, who, soaring too high on artificial wings, exposed the wax wherewith they were joined to be melted by the sun, and so fell into the sea and was drowned, may undoubtedly be made to point out the virtue of moderation. Atalanta may be interpreted as art which "is far more swift than nature, more speedy in pace, and sooner attains the end it aims at," if not enticed out of the way by the golden apples of gain. The vicissitudes of Jove in his combat with Typhon may be twisted to signify "the variable fortune of princes and the rebellious insurrection of traitors in a state." What is wanted, however, is any vestige of proof that the interpretation desired is that which was intended; and we need only glance through Bacon's little book to satisfy ourselves how hard he is often driven to find a reasonable (as we account reasonable) meaning for his parables. It is apt to cause us astonishment to find that "Prometheus doth clearly and eminently signify Providence," and that Diomedes, who did not hesitate to encounter and wound Venus in one of the battles on the plain of Troy, and who was afterwards, when he fled into Italy, murdered by his host, King Daunus, represents that zeal which would "endeavour to reform and convince any sect of religion (though vain, corrupt and infamous, shadowed by the person of Venus), not by force

of argument and doctrine and holiness of life, and by the weight of examples and authority, but labour to extirpate and root it out by fire and sword and tortures," yet comes at last to a miserable end.

The mediæval monks who compiled the *Gesta Romanorum* were perhaps the cleverest of men in twisting a moral out of the unlikeliest stories. One of their parables relates to a youth who was captured by pirates. His father refused to redeem him. The pirate, who had him in chains, had a daughter, who, on the youth's promise to marry her, set him free and fled with him to his own home. His father then forbade him to marry the maiden, alleging that she had deceived her own father and liberated him for the gratification of her passions, and therefore ought not to be trusted. A spirited retort by the lady, however, procured his consent; her lover married her with great pomp, and lived happy ever after. Here, it seems, the youth taken by pirates typifies the whole human race taken captive by the devil through the sin of our first parents; the father who would not redeem him is the world; the pirate's daughter is the Second Person of the Trinity, who had pity on the human race, and, after his Passion, descended into hell and freed mankind from the chains of the devil!¹ He

¹ Oesterley, *Gesta Rom.*, Berlin, 1872, Tale v. p. 278. The English *Gesta* makes a little better sense. Herrtage, Tale vii. p. 306.

who would surpass this feat in exposition would be an ingenious man.

On the other hand, there are many stories, like that of Puss in Boots, out of which it would puzzle even the compilers of the *Gesta* to extract a moral. This at least is true of the story as it is known to us from Perrault, and in most other versions of the West of Europe. There are versions elsewhere in which a moral may be found; but again we are "lumpish and almost leaden" enough to come back to the question whether the moral was really intended. This cannot be decided without first ascertaining which version of the story was the original, and which of them are derivative and corrupted. In the valley of the Ganges the tale is told without a moral; in Cashmere it has a moral. In Mongolia it has the same moral as in Cashmere, that of kindness to animals; in Zanzibar it has another moral, that of the danger of ingratitude. In Italy sometimes it has a moral, sometimes none. But as for any allegory, not a trace is to be found, in whatever version of the story you look for it. A similar perplexity meets us when we find a story expounded as an allegory in two different ways. Bacon, as we saw, interpreted *Atalanta* of art enticed from its proper course by gain. The monks, however, had another explanation. For them *Atalanta* is "the soul of man,

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with whom many devils desire to run and to deceive her through their temptations ; ” and the three golden balls are the desire of the flesh, pride, and covetousness.¹ The wisdom that could only be expressed in this blundering, ambiguous fashion must have been perilously nigh unto folly.

This method of explaining the mythological tales was much older than even the *Gesta Romanorum*. Educated Greeks, as they advanced in culture, became as fully sensible as ourselves of the irrational and immoral character of their gods, as they were known in the sacred legends. The philosophers endeavoured to explain them in various ways. Beginning with Theagenes, towards the end of the sixth century before Christ, many treated them as allegories, either physical or ethical, in order to reconcile them with growing knowledge and refinement. Socrates, however, led a new departure, that of expounding the names as etymological blunders and corruptions. He indeed made the suggestion as a means of evading difficulties which arose in allegorising the stories. With wider knowledge than fell to the share of any Greek, it has been, during the present century, elaborated and applied to a different end. Philologists, learned in

¹ Herrtage, *Gesta*, London, Early English Text Society, 1879, p. 430. See also Tale xxxii. p. 125.

Sanskrit, the language of the classical writings of India, having discovered that Greek was a sister-tongue, and that Greek and Sanskrit, with Persian, Armenian, Latin, and the various Celtic, Lettic, Slav, and Teutonic languages, formed one great family of speech, proceeded to postulate an Aryan race, which once upon a time had spoken it in some unknown original home, and to piece together its mythology. Since the *Rig-Veda*, the most ancient sacred book of India, was at the same time the most ancient monument of Aryan literature, they resorted to it for the key to mythology. They found the key, as they thought, in the names and epithets of the gods invoked in the hymns of which the *Rig-Veda* is composed. They soon formed a list of equivalent names, whereof, be it noted, some are undoubted, while others are still no more than ingenious guesses. Thus, Agni is equated with *ignis*, fire; the Greek Zeus, the Latin Jupiter, the German Tiw (who survives in our Tuesday), are declared to be Dyaus, the sky; Daphne, the maiden persecuted by Apollo's unwelcome attentions and changed into the laurel, is traced to a Sanskrit word, *dahanā* or *ahanā*, and is interpreted as the dawn pursued by the rising sun. The *Rig-Veda* is poetry, the product of a comparatively advanced civilisation. The poets to whom we are indebted for it used highly metaphorical expressions, and

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addressed now one, now another, deity in the most hyperbolic and passionate language. This the philologists mistook for the every-day speech of the primitive hypothetical Aryan people, and attributed the birth of gods and the growth of stories about them to the decay of imagination among the descendants of the folk who had habitually indulged in this "tall talk," and their forgetfulness and corruption of the primeval meaning of the words and phrases used by their ancestors.

The home of the Philological School was Germany, where its interpretations were almost universally accepted. It became popular in England during the sixties, owing to the writings of Professor Max Müller. Its methods, however, were soon discovered to be little less subjective than those of the Allegorical School. This discovery, hastened by the divergences of interpretation among its exponents, and the tendency to interpret every story as a sun-myth, speedily produced a reaction. The way was prepared by the researches of Dr. Tylor, who extended his survey of the field of mythology into regions ignored by the philologists. But the first direct attack was delivered in Germany by Mannhardt, previously an adherent, who in 1875 published the result of his inquiries into Tree-worship among the Germans and neighbouring peoples,

as the first part of a work entitled *Wald- und Feldkulte*. In this volume, and its successor on the Tree-worship of the ancients, he boldly set aside the current philological interpretations, and examined the mythological stories in connection with custom and belief. Mannhardt died prematurely in 1880; but the impetus he had given to the really fruitful study of tale and custom acquired fresh momentum from the studies of younger men. In 1887, after some preliminary essays and an article on mythology in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Mr. Andrew Lang gave the finishing stroke to the philological method by the wit, learning, and logical vigour of his book on *Myth, Ritual, and Religion*.

The philological method thus gave way to what may be called the anthropological method of interpreting folktales. The principles governing the anthropological method are those which guide every truly scientific inquiry. The anthropological method is, in fact, the application of induction to folktales. Its groundwork is as wide a collection of facts as possible; for the wider the collection of relevant facts, the surer, of course, is likely to be the induction. It is only during the last half-century that a sufficient store of tales has been accumulated in books, and a sufficient knowledge of customs and superstitions in various parts of the world has been made available

to students for anything like a safe induction. These tales, customs, and superstitions were inaccessible to the ancient philosophers. They were inaccessible to Bacon. To a large extent they were inaccessible to Grimm, though to Grimm we are indebted for first discerning the importance of folktales, and for inaugurating their systematic collection and comparison. He did not, it is true, directly connect them with the collection and comparison of customs and superstitions. Yet the point of view he occupied was wholly different from Bacon's; and in the notes to his *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, written in his old age and published just fifty years ago, he is obviously on his way to discoveries of the kind afterwards made by Mannhardt and his followers.

The study of man, his physical, mental, and moral characteristics and conditions, is one of modern growth. It is part of the general scientific inquisitiveness which is so marked a feature of the nineteenth century; and it has been greatly aided by political circumstances and the missionary zeal of more than one Christian church. To govern a subject people properly, it is necessary to understand them. Effectively to teach a savage people the elements of a higher religion and a higher morality, to impose upon barbarians the laws of a higher civilisation, you must first penetrate their modes

of thought, you must learn how they regard themselves and the external world. Here it is that the collection and comparison of folklore comes in; for, as we have no direct access to the minds of other people, we can only know them by their products. Now, folktales are one branch of folklore; and in them we may find reflected the beliefs and customs of the people who tell them. This is, of course, especially the case with stories believed to be true. Thus, a Maori tradition of the settlement of the islands of New Zealand relates that a chief, named Wheketoro, brought certain reptiles and put them on an island, which he made *tabu* (sacred) to save them from the plundering propensity of man. Another chief, named Kaiawa, resolved to remove the *tabu*, and for that purpose went over to the island with his daughter. She was required to hold steady the wood which her father would use to procure fire by friction, and to represent the female gods in the ceremony. But he forgot to veil the maiden's eyes, as is the custom when strangers or females are near sacred places. They saw there a certain dog called Moho-rangi, which stared at her with a fixed gaze. Two pairs of birds had been left by Wheketoro in charge of the island. After the sacred fires had been kindled, Kaiawa fumigated one pair of these birds until they sneezed, which made them quite tame. This done, he tried to

fumigate the other pair, but they flew away, and they and their offspring have been wild and shy of man ever since. Then he returned to seek his daughter. She had disappeared. Raising his eyes, he looked out on the sea, and beheld her turned into a rock standing in the ocean. To this day women will not go to that island, lest the maiden's fate be theirs, or they be killed by stones falling from the cliffs; and strangers who go there never neglect to cover their eyes, to prevent their seeing the dog Moho-rangi.¹ This story is regarded as a literal piece of history. Wheketoro is not the night, nor is Kaiawa the dawn or the sun. Every incident of the narrative reflects some superstition or some custom well known to the story-teller; and it is intelligible only in connection with these beliefs and customs.

Stories told for amusement preserve similar records of the mental condition of those who relate them. Here, however, it is somewhat less easy to read the records, because the tales containing them may have travelled far from their place of origin. Tales pass rapidly from mouth to mouth. Some of them may never have been believed as narratives of fact. They may have been told at the outset for mere amusement, or

¹ White, *Ancient History of the Maori*, vol. ii., Wellington, 1889, pp. 189, 192.

they may have originated in that twilight habit of the mind familiar to humanity which does not attempt accurately to distinguish what is meant to be believed from what is meant to do no more than pass the time. In any case, it is safe to say that they must have embodied what those who first told and those who first heard them regarded as probabilities. Had they been the wild impossibilities to their original audience which they are to us, they would never have conciliated the favour of mankind. Nay, they would have been, to use Bacon's expression, "such as no man would so much as imagine or relate."

Let us, as an example, take the story of Cinderella. As usually told to children in England, the story of Cinderella is a translation from the French of Perrault, who, in the last years of the seventeenth century, published this among other *Contes de ma Mère l'Oye*, in the name of his little boy. The child, indeed, had, as Mr. Andrew Lang conjectures with probability, some share in the authorship. The tales so published may well have been written down by him under his father's encouragement as a childish exercise, from his memory of his nurse's recital, and have been touched up by Perrault. Be this as it may, the tales were soon done into English. In chapbook form their popularity has continued down to the present hour, and has been one of the most potent

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of the various forces which have combined to drive from the field many of our native nursery-tales. We probably had a Cinderella story. It has been found in Ireland and abundantly in Scotland. But, though allied forms have been found in England, no example exactly of the Cinderella type has been recovered. The chapbook version of Perrault's tale has destroyed it for ever.

Perrault's Cinderella (with perhaps a little manipulation) represents the story, then, as told somewhere in France in the latter half of the seventeenth century. Like other folktales, it is of ancient and unknown date. Like other folktales, too, it has been handed down from more barbarous times, and has been adapted to a state of society slowly changing and to manners becoming more and more civilised. The *deus ex machinâ* is, it will be remembered, a fairy godmother (*sa Maraine qui estoit Fée*). A godmother was, of course, a good-natured familiar in all ranks of French society; and the peasants at least, among whom the tale was at home, believed with full assurance in the existence of fairies, and in the possibility of their entering into relations with mankind. But in this form the beneficent power is a transformation from a much more barbarous original to suit French peasant views of probability. I have not space here for the comparison on which a real induction can be

founded; all I can do is to refer to one or two striking examples. Turning then to the Scottish tale of Rashin Coatie, we find the beneficent fairy in the shape of a red calf bequeathed to the heroine by her dying mother. The stepmother causes the calf to be killed, but by the dead animal's directions Rashin Coatie buries its bones under a certain grey stone. Afterwards, whenever she wants anything, she goes to the grey stone and gets it from the red calf, together with all needful instructions.¹ In the tale of 'The Wonderful Birch from Russian Carelia we get a step farther. There a witch-wife changes the heroine's mother into a black sheep and takes her place. Then the false mother (the witch-wife) orders the sheep to be slaughtered. Warned by the sheep, the heroine does not partake of its flesh, but gathers and buries its bones. Out of the grave grows a wonderful birch-tree, and from the tree and the grave the heroine gets help and counsel.² In this tale it is clear that, as Mr. Lang remarks, the sheep and the tree are but the mother surviving in those two forms. A Scottish tale from Inverness-shire is yet more savage in its character. There the heroine's mother is *from the first* a sheep, though a sheep

¹ *Folklore*, vol. i. p. 289.

² *Finnische Märchen*, übersetzt von Emmy Schreck, Weimar, 1887, p. 63, Story No. 9.

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of magical power. After she is slain and her bones buried by her daughter's pious care she does nothing, until, at the end of a certain period, she revives as a beautiful princess and clothes her daughter for the feast at which the king's son is to fall in love with her.¹

The last two stories must have originated at a time when shape and species were not considered necessary to personal identity. No one who knows anything of savage beliefs needs to be told that in certain low stages of civilisation the power of shape-shifting is one of the most common attributes not merely of supernatural beings and of professional wizards, but of ordinary human beings. A man may be quite conscious that he cannot change his own form at his own will, yet at the same time he may firmly believe that other men can, and that they can change his form too. It is, therefore, impossible to know for certain that any beast, or tree, or stone, or, in fact, any object of external nature, is not a disguised man or woman. If it be not so already, it may become a man or woman by this power of shape-shifting. Moreover, the savage endows every object with his own consciousness, and holds that it acts from motives which are the analogues of his own. He speaks of the lower animals, for example, as if they were human

¹ *Cinderella*, by Marian Roalfe Cox, p. 534.

beings; and thereby he often perplexes more civilised listeners, who cannot make out whether in his stories the actors are human or not. To him it is a matter of indifference, as in either case they would act in precisely the same way; and probably he does not know, or care to define, the exact category in the scale of being to which they belong. In our stage of civilisation this attitude of mind towards the lower animals and other objects only survives in the make-believe of apologues, and of stories handed down to us from elder times—play-stories to us, but to our remote ancestors very real and serious.

One consequence of it is that the repugnance with which we should listen to a story, if seriously told, of the marriage of a man or woman with a beast or a bird, is wanting in the savage mind. A Nisqa of British Columbia, doubtless, would not contemplate the possibility of such unions among his contemporaries. Nevertheless, he believes that a maiden of his own people was once carried off and wedded by an owl, to whom one of the clans thus traces its paternity. In the Carelian and the two Scottish stories we have just examined we have a descending scale going back into savagery no higher than this; and if we reverse the order, we shall see the steps by which the tale rose to the level on which we find it in Perrault's collection. In the lowest stage

the man has a child by a sheep. Here the Inverness peasant has preserved what for our present purpose is the oldest form of the story—a form which would not revolt, but would be perfectly credible to, a Nîsqa. The Carelian tale must have once been similar. As handed down to us, however, the heroine's mother is only changed into a sheep at a later moment, and by the machinations of a witch-wife, who takes her place and shape. Those who tell it have modified the savage feature which has, by their advance in civilisation, become repulsive, and only retain the belief in metamorphosis which, though equally savage, is less objectionable on moral grounds, and, it may be, less incredible.¹ This is the second stage. In the other Scottish tale the metamorphosis has vanished also. The red calf is no longer identified with the mother herself. It is only bequeathed by her, and there is nothing to show that it has ever been anything else than a red calf. Still its magical powers are kept: it speaks from the grave and bestows wonderful gifts. This is the third stage. Lastly, we come to Perrault and the seventeenth-century French peasant. In this tale the mother becomes a god-

¹ I do not, of course, suggest that the union of man and sheep is less repugnant to the Scottish peasant now, but only that, for some reason at present unknown, a more archaic version of the tale has been preserved in Inverness.

mother. Inasmuch as it is necessary for her to perform wonders, and human godmothers, however kindly intentioned, cannot do that, she is presented as a fairy; for the fairy has retained magical powers which have ceased to be ascribed to any human being. These powers are still seriously ascribed to the fairy people by the peasantry of all the West of Europe; and in the play-stories of every civilised nation they survive to record a portion of the beliefs once vigorous and active among all classes, but now relegated to those who are ignorant and out of the way.

If we look at the classical myths, we find the same phenomenon. Zeus under many forms, a bull, a swan, a shower of gold, unites himself to various heroines. The nymph Callisto shares his favours, and he changes her into a she-bear, who is recognised as the mother by him of the Arcadian folk. In these and other tales we have late and refined forms of beliefs, in their origin as savage as that of the Nisqa. By comparing tales from other parts of the world, of which Cinderella is one, it is abundantly clear that the bull-manifestation or the swan-manifestation of the great god Zeus was once a literal bull or swan, and that Callisto was once a literal bear. An advance in culture rendered that crude belief both repulsive and incredible. The higher polytheism grew up, and provided a temporary evasion of the difficulty

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by identifying such events with adventures of the gods. Thus the tales were shorn of half their grossness, but they remain relics and undeniable witnesses of the savagery out of which the Greeks had emerged at the dawn of history. In the process many of them received a garniture of beauty such as none but the Greeks, with their unrivalled artistic genius, could have conferred.

Nor do the tales of Greek mythology confess their savage origin merely by their general character. There is, in fact, hardly one incident in them that has not its parallel in the myths of existing savages. The resemblance is not confined to Zulu and Maori stories. It extends over the whole savage world. The adventure of Phaethon is found among the Kwakiutl of British Columbia. Phaethon, driving recklessly or weakly the chariot of his father the sun, came so near to the earth that he almost set it on fire; and to save the world, Zeus, with a flash of his lightning, slew the youth. The Kwakiutl tell that the minx was the sun's son. Climbing up to heaven, he was intrusted by his father with his nose- and ear-jewels, which gave light to the world, and sent to bear them across the sky, that their true owner might rest. The father impressed upon him to be careful and not go too near the earth, lest he set it on fire. All went well until noon. Then the minx became impatient, thrust the clouds out

of the way, and hurriedly started to run. The earth speedily became so hot that the rocks burst and the water began to boil. A conflagration must have ensued, had not his father seen, and, hastening after him, torn the nose- and ear-jewels from him and hurled him into the sea.¹ Again, just as Atalanta was delayed in the race by the golden apples flung by Meilanion, so among the Mbamba of Angola it is told that a cannibal husband was delayed by his fugitive wife, who flung down first millet, then sesamum, and lastly eleusine. The cannibal stopped each time to gather what has fallen, singing, "Pick, pick up! A fruit, don't waste it." Gaining time by this device, the woman succeeded in putting a river between herself and her pursuer, and reached home in safety.²

Here we are confronted with the problem how far stories like these can have been transmitted from classic lands, or from some other centre. Taking these two legends of Phaethon and Atalanta as examples, however difficult it may be to believe that they can have arisen independently in more places than one, the difficulties in holding that the stories of the minx and the fugitive wife

¹ *Indianische Sagen von der Nord-Pacifischen Küste Amerikas*, von Franz Boas, Berlin, 1895, p. 157.

² *Folktales of Angola*, by Heli Chatelain, Boston, 1894, p. 99.

are derived from classic sources are still greater. The legend of the minx is not a play-story. It is seriously believed in British Columbia. The minx is a great figure in the mythology of the tribes of that province; he obtained the invaluable gift of fire for men, and to his escapades many of the peculiarities of the world are attributed. But if the borrowing of the story be thus improbable, the physical difficulties of the transmission would seem to be insuperable. The case for the independent origin of the Mbamba story cannot be put quite so high. The story is one told for amusement only; and the physical difficulties, though great, are not such as to render transmission impossible. But the Mbamba "are fanatically opposed to any innovation," even in a tale. Moreover, the existence of a tribe of cannibals, to which the husband of the story belongs, is an article of their faith. The inveigling of women by other tribes, and the escape of ill-used wives are frequent incidents in the life of savage peoples; while stratagems to delay pursuers would occur to any fugitive, and are commonplaces in the folklore of all nations. The stratagem in the present instance has a native appearance, too thorough to need the hypothesis of borrowing.

The most famous form of the theory that similar stories are, at least in an overwhelming majority of cases, borrowed and not separately

invented, is that which owes its currency to the great Sanskrit scholar, Benfey. In the year 1859 he published a translation of the Indian collection called the *Panchatantra*, accompanied by an elaborate introduction and notes, in which he drew attention to the parallels between Indian and European folktales, and traced the latter to a Buddhist origin. Buddha flourished in Northern India about the sixth century before Christ. Buddhist missionaries soon made their way into all the surrounding countries. Much of their teaching was conveyed in parables, which they ascribed to Buddha himself. By Alexander's invasion, India was brought into direct relations with the West. Among other Indian products, the Buddhist parables found their way to Europe. The written collections (and there were more than one of them) were translated into various tongues of the nearer East, and ultimately into Greek and Latin. The fables bearing the name of Æsop, the romance of the "The Seven Sages," and that of "Barlaam and Josaphat," all popular collections during the Middle Ages, and translated into almost every European language, can be traced by literary transmission, either as collections or in respect of a majority of the component stories, to the Buddhist parables. Many of these stories, or stories closely akin to them, are found in the peasant traditions of Europe. Benfey argued that

they were dispersed from India by means of the written collections. But this did not fit all the facts. Succeeding writers, of whom M. Cosquin in France and Mr. Joseph Jacobs in this country are the most eminent, having a wider knowledge of folktales than Benfey with all his learning had, were bound to concede that the stories traceable from India by literary channels were very far from exhausting the Indian stock. There are other Sanskrit collections, formed more or less under Buddhist influence, containing numbers of tales common to European tradition and indeed throughout the world; and these tales, as well as other tales also belonging to the common stock, are found in the mouths of the Indian peoples at the present day. A new theory, therefore, had to be framed, if the claims of India as the birth-place of traditional stories were to be maintained. The Buddhist propaganda, accordingly, was cast aside. The stories were admitted to have existed in India long before Buddhism. Their transmission, it was alleged, did not date from the preaching of "the Noble Eightfold Path," nor was it wholly or chiefly conducted through literary channels. It began in prehistoric times, and has been going on ever since, by word of mouth.

To examine the theory in detail and discuss the ingenious arguments with which it has been supported would carry us beyond the limit of a paper

like this. Shortly, however, it may be said that it has two great and insurmountable difficulties to face, one dealing with the matter, and the other with the form, of the tales.

Before mentioning these it must be said that, since the stories are *ex hypothesi* delivered by way of verbal communication, it is impossible historically to trace the transmission. Even where we can, as in the case of the stories of the *Panchatantra*, trace the transmission by literary channels, the pre-existence of similar stories in, let us say, Europe cannot be wholly excluded. For it must always be remembered that mere priority of record is no proof of priority of existence of any given version of a tale over other versions, still less is it proof of priority of ownership. We have seen that in the seventeenth century a version of Cinderella was written down in France, much more modern in its form than versions from Russian Carelia and Scotland, first recorded some two centuries later. It cannot be supposed that the latter were derived from Perrault's story, nor can we even infer that they are in point of time younger. All alike they date from savagery; but the versions more recently recorded have preserved more savage, and consequently older, forms than the one first set down. This is a phenomenon of frequent occurrence. To ascertain the place of origin of a story, we are, therefore, thrown back

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upon internal evidence, that is, upon reasoning from the stories themselves, their contents and their form. It is here that the two difficulties come in.

First of all, folktales are founded upon modes of thought and action by no means peculiar to India—modes of thought and action inseparable from the status of savagery, and of which India has no monopoly. To contend, therefore, as M. Cosquin does, that the true argument against the Indian origin of folktales would be to show that they are in contradiction with the ideas prevalent in India, is entirely to misconceive the situation, and to throw the burden of proof upon the wrong shoulders. If it could be proved that the ideas on which the stories are founded were prevalent in India and in India alone, then of course M. Cosquin's contention would be valid. But this is contrary to the facts. India has no special property in the material of which folktales are woven; it is a material common to the entire world. Here is the first difficulty.

As India has no special property in the material of folktales, so it has none in their form. Are we to suppose that all the rest of mankind have been destitute of the story-making faculty? It is incredible. The telling of tales is universal, and the telling of tales stimulates their invention. Accordingly, tales actually exist elsewhere which

have no known analogue in India, just as India itself possesses tales that have not, so far as is ascertained, passed to other lands. If in neither case do these particular tales belong to the stock common to India and the rest of the world, yet they have the same general characteristics, and are made up of similar incidents. Must we then think that a race of romantic geniuses arose at some unknown period in India, and nowhere else, and invented tales adapted to universal acceptance? Was there never a genius born in Europe or in Africa in early times who could originate a story capable of appealing successfully to the imagination of humanity at large? The question answers itself.

In putting the case thus, however, I am putting it in the way most favourable to the theory of the Indian origin. For, as Mr. Jacobs has clearly seen, it is necessary to the argument to emphasise the artistic character of the tales. Many of them are, he says, "masterpieces of constructive literary art," and as such they must have been invented once for all. Some folktales certainly do seem put together with much artistic skill, and if they were always and everywhere told in the same way, the argument would have much force. But the truth is that they are a patchwork of incidents founded on common modes of thought and action. These incidents are put together sometimes with,

and sometimes without, artistic skill, sometimes in one sequence, at other times in another sequence.

If the artistic character of a story be insisted upon as a criterion, then the original form must be the most artistic; and if the argument be worth anything to prove the Indian origin of a tale, it must go on to show that the Indian form is always the most artistic. But this never has been shown. Nay, in some cases, as in that of the story of Perseus, the Indian form is quite the reverse of artistic. Besides, it is misleading to speak of "the Indian form," because usually there are more Indian forms than one, and, so far as I am aware, nobody has yet decided which is the original. Nor in India is the patchwork character of folktales less evident than in other countries. The incidents reappear in every conceivable connection and sequence, now forming part of one plot and now of another. Those who believe in the Indian origin may follow a tale from land to land, and think they can almost reconstruct the Indian version from comparison with others. But they are constantly liable to be disappointed by finding the incidents dislocated, or even scattered and redistributed in plots having no apparent connection with that for which they are looking. Here is the second difficulty.

These two difficulties are together, if not separately, fatal to the claims of India as the only

birthplace of folktales which have attained world-wide, or at all events general, currency. To deny the claims of India involves, by parity of reasoning, a denial of the claims of any other country. It does not, however, involve the assertion that all parallel stories are of independent origin. That stories do travel is indisputable; that they are often borrowed is beyond doubt. On the other hand, we are not warranted in explaining every coincidence by borrowing. Each must be judged upon its own merits. In doing so, large allowance must be made for the oneness of human nature and the similarity of social and other conditions. No one can study the habits of mankind, the processes of thought and the institutions of savage races without being deeply impressed with the unity which underlies all diversity. It would be strange indeed if this underlying unity were exhibited in everything but folktales. And that it is exhibited in folktales also means not that one people has necessarily borrowed from another. It may mean that, given a similar plane of culture, parallel incidents, or even parallel series of incidents, may be equally well imagined by either. Similarity of incident and of what I may call "stage-properties" must of course be limited by the state of society and by external objects. There is no talk of kings or coaches or glass slippers in the stories of the Australian Blackfellows, nor do you hear


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of kangaroos or totems or intermarrying classes in the tales of Scottish peasants. But, subject to these necessary limitations, it would be hard to say where similar personages, similar incidents, and similar machinery cannot be found. Sometimes they are borrowed, provided they are delivered in a form suitable to the stage of civilisation of the recipients. I am inclined to think that the cases of independent origination are at least as numerous.

✓/ The classical tales, then, like other European folktales, are tales handed down by tradition from older and more barbarous ages. In Bacon's words, "they were common things, derived from precedent memorials." As such, they are records of modes of thought and of institutions out of which the Greeks arose to altitudes of civilisation, where, having lost all direct memory of the past, the sacred stories became to them subjects of perplexity and even shame. They are not the result of philological blunders, nor are they apologues. Philological blunders—folk-etymologies—do exist and give occasion for traditional tales. But these are usually transparent, and do not pretend to be other than they are: stories told to explain a name or a phrase. It is more doubtful how far apologues are a product of tradition. Many fables, like the beast-tales of Æsop or the Buddhist birth-stories, were once, beyond doubt, ordinary

traditional narratives wherein beast and man were indistinguishable. Their appropriation to the purpose of moral or political teaching or of satire came later, when men had ceased to accept them literally and needed make-believe tales to point an exhortation or convey reproof. This secondary application may be traditional. In some cases it is. But that it is a secondary phase, and not primary, should be steadily borne in mind.

It will be evident from what has been said that modern European folktales cannot be the worn-down relics of the classical mythology. They are rather stuff of the kind out of which the classical and other mythologies grew. To suppose that they were merely the detritus of official stories of the classical mythology would be to leave that mythology itself unexplained. It would be to leave the vast stores of savage folktales unaccounted for. It would be to ignore the similarity of the incidents of which folktales all over the world are made up. The theory was once popular. In this island Sir Walter Scott was among its most distinguished advocates. More recently it has been combined with the philological theory of mythology. The same reasons, however, which have led to the abandonment of the philological theory have brought about a truer conception of the origin and meaning of folktales. The enlargement of our knowledge of human



institutions, human customs, and human beliefs, as well as of stories told for pastime, requires and provides, for mythology and folktales alike, an explanation convincing and satisfactory, because it rests not on local or racial peculiarities of speech or belief, but on the surer ground of a common human nature.

In this general sketch of the scientific study of folktales and mythology, I have abstained from obtruding technicalities, but it may be well before closing to indicate the principal divisions into which folktales fall. I have spoken of play-stories and serious tales. Serious tales are those intended, or at one time intended, to be believed. They are in Europe ordinarily attached to some historic or quasi-historic name or to some place, or are occupied with supernatural beings, as fairies, ghosts, or witches. In savage countries they relate to some hero, actual or mythical, or they account for a local peculiarity, or for the existence or form of some external object or social institution. Such tales are called "Sagas," a word adopted from the German. In English, the word "Legend" is often applied to them. On the continent of Europe the word "Legend" is confined to religious narratives, or sagas about sacred personages, localities, or objects.

Among play-stories, or stories told merely for amusement, the most important are "*Märchen*"

(a German word meaning a little tale) or "Nursery-tales," the class to which Cinderella belongs. These are for the most part narratives embodying marvellous occurrences. But, because they are not intended for serious belief, they claim the warrant of no great heroic name, they are linked to no definite locality. Many of them contain incidents of the same character as those of sagas. Indeed, many stories are found sometimes as sagas and sometimes as *märchen*. The exact explanation of this phenomenon is probably different in different cases. In one case the saga may have reached a people who knew nothing of the locality to which it really belonged, and had no reverence for the sacred personage whose adventures it related. Adopted thus in a new home, it may have obtained an existence and vitality independent of any name or place: in other words, it will have become a *märchen*. In another case, a story already current may have become anchored on a certain spot, or attached itself to some historic or mythical name. The *märchen* will thus have become a *saga*. A hero like King Arthur, Frederick Barbarossa, Robert Bruce, or Oliver Cromwell, has a tendency to attract floating tales. Religious heroes—saints—have special powers of attraction; but any great personality is endowed with these powers in proportion to the impression it has made on the

popular mind. In our own day, when miraculous powers are no longer credited even to religious leaders, and consequently stories involving the supernatural element have almost ceased to be current among fairly educated persons, the power of attracting floating tales is still exercised by great men: only the tales are humorous or witty anecdotes.

This leads me to another kind of play-story: the "Droll," of which the Anecdote is a species. The droll is a comic tale, and its object is not merely amusement, but laughter. The droll has been conjectured to be a later growth of culture than the *märchen*, and to be the amusement rather of men than of women. Colour is given to these conjectures by the fact that some stories are found in the form of sagas, *märchen*, and drolls. Roger of Wendover, under the year 1048, gives an account of two women at Rome who, by witchcraft, had transformed a youth into an ass, and made him perform tricks. He was bought from them by a wealthy man, whom they warned to keep him away from water. After a while the ass was successful in breaking his halter and escaping, and he plunged into a pool of water, where he recovered his human form. To his owner's astonishment he related his adventures, and they were reported to Pope Leo. The pope was at first incredulous, but the women were tried

and confessed the witchcraft. This tale, solemnly related and evidently believed by the chronicler, is a very old *märchen*, found all over Europe, on the Mediterranean shores of Africa, and in India. When told as a droll, the change of donkey to man is a trick of some thieves. Thus, in a Breton version, some monks find and steal a miller's donkey, tying up one of their number in his place. When the miller comes to look for the animal he finds the monk, who tells him that he is the donkey, that he was condemned for his sins to penance in that shape, but that his term of penance is now ended and he has returned to his pristine condition. The miller had no alternative but to give him his freedom. The monks, however, were paid out. For, some time after, when they wanted to sell the donkey at the fair of Plouër, the miller saw it and took care to warn all his neighbours of what had happened with the same animal to him. No one, therefore, would buy it, and the monks, who had hoped to make money out of it, were disappointed of their sale.¹

Many stories are found as traditional ballads. The North and North-West of Europe is particularly rich in this kind of unwritten literature, often of great beauty. The charms of verse render material help in keeping alive the memory of traditional narratives. It is indeed by no

¹ *Revue des Traditions Populaires*, vol. xi. p. 633.

means rare to find folktales preserved only in this way. Thus, a story once current in England, and closely allied to that of Cinderella, would have been lost but for the ballad of *Catskin*.

For scientific purposes folktales are arranged in *groups* and *types*, corresponding to the *genera* and *species* of the natural sciences. Attempts at classification have been made by Von Hahn, Mr. Baring Gould, Mr. Joseph Jacobs, Colonel Temple, and others; but none have yet been completely wrought out. Individual stories of any type are spoken of as *variants*.

Such is a very brief and imperfect outline of a subject of vast range and almost unlimited interest. The study of mythology and folktales, conducted on scientific lines and in connection with that of customs, institutions, and beliefs, has already exercised a considerable influence on modern thought. It is probably destined to still greater power, when its bearings on the long history of mankind are fully understood.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL APPENDIX.

(a) AIDS TO THE STUDY OF FOLKTALES.

THE literature of folktales and their interpretation is of enormous extent. In the following list only a few standard works are mentioned, and such as will be useful to an English reader desiring a further general acquaintance with the subject. Collections of folktales are only included where the volumes contain introductory or elucidatory matter of importance.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE SCIENCE OF MYTHOLOGY. By the Right Hon. Professor F. Max Müller, K.M. 2 vols. London, Longmans, 1897.

CHIPS FROM A GERMAN WORKSHOP. By the same. 4 vols. London, Longmans, 1867-75.

SELECTED ESSAYS ON LANGUAGE, MYTHOLOGY, AND RELIGION. By the same. 2 vols. London, Longmans, 1881.

THE MYTHOLOGY OF THE ARYAN NATIONS. By George W. Cox, M.A. 2 vols. London, Longmans, 1870.

ZOOLOGICAL MYTHOLOGY, OR THE LEGENDS OF ANIMALS. By Angelo de Gubernatis. 2 vols. London, Trübner, 1872.

[The foregoing reveal the philological interpretation of folktales and mythology in its strength and in its weakness, in the eloquence with which it has been advocated, and in the absurdities and excesses to which it has led. The next five works on the list supply the corrective.]

CUSTOM AND MYTH. By Andrew Lang, M.A. London, Longmans, 1884.

GRIMM'S HOUSEHOLD TALES, with the author's notes. Translated from the German and edited by Margaret Hunt. With an introduction by Andrew Lang, M.A. 2 vols. London, George Bell & Sons, 1884.

MYTH, RITUAL, AND RELIGION. By Andrew Lang, M.A. 2 vols. London, Longmans, 1887.

[A more recent edition has been published (1899), but the older one is the edition recommended.]

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PERRAULT'S POPULAR TALES. Edited from the original editions, with introduction, &c., by the same. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1888.

MODERN MYTHOLOGY. By the same. London, Longmans, 1897.

WIDE-AWAKE STORIES. A Collection of Tales told by Little Children between Sunset and Sunrise in the Panjab and Kashmir. By F. A. Steel and R. C. Temple. London, Tribner, 1884.

[Contains an admirable survey of folktale incidents by Colonel Temple.]

THE HANDBOOK OF FOLKLORE. Edited by George Lawrence Gomme, F.S.A. London, Folklore Society, 1890.

[Contains sections on folktales, myths, and ballads.]

CINDERELLA. Three hundred and forty-five variants of Cinderella, Catskin, and Cap o' Rushes, abstracted and tabulated, with a discussion of mediæval analogues, and notes. By Marian Roalfe Cox. With an introduction by Andrew Lang, M.A. London, Folklore Society, 1893.

[A remarkable collection. Miss Cox's preface and notes are a monument of folktale learning. Mr. Lang, in the introduction, defends himself with vigour and success against M. Cosquin. See below.]

THE INTERNATIONAL FOLKLORE CONGRESS, 1891. Papers and Transactions. Edited by Joseph Jacobs and Alfred Nutt. London, Folklore Society, 1892.

[The Folktale section contains the chairman's address on the problems of Transmission, and papers by Mr. W. Newell (secretary of the American Folklore Society), M. Emmanuel Cosquin, Mr. Joseph Jacobs, Mr. David MacRitchie, Mr. Alfred Nutt, and M. Ilmarin Krohn.]

CONTES POPULAIRES DE LORRAINE. Comparés avec les Contes des autres Provinces de France et des Pays Étrangers, et précédés d'un Essai sur l'Origine et la Propagation des Contes Populaires Européens. By Emmanuel Cosquin. 2 vols. Paris, Vieweg. [1886.]

[M. Cosquin with much learning and skill maintains the proposition that the European and other folktales of common stock were derived from India.]

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL APPENDIX 43

THE GOLDEN BOUGH : A STUDY IN COMPARATIVE RELIGION. By J. G. Frazer, M.A. 2 vols. London, Macmillan, 1890.

[A work of the first importance for the study of the relation between tale and custom.]

THE SCIENCE OF FAIRY TALES : AN INQUIRY INTO FAIRY MYTHOLOGY. By Edwin Sidney Hartland. London, Walter Scott, 1891.

THE LEGEND OF PERSEUS : A STUDY OF TRADITION IN STORY, CUSTOM, AND BELIEF. By the same. 3 vols. London, D. Nutt, 1894-95-96.

[I may perhaps be forgiven for adding these. In the former I have dealt with a number of fairy sagas ; in the latter I have tried to exhibit the dependence of the folktale upon custom and superstition, and to determine the place of origin of one world-famous tale.]

(b) CHRONOLOGICO-BIBLIOGRAPHICAL SURVEY OF FOLKTALE LITERATURE.

[I have essayed in the following pages both to exhibit the chief literature in which folk- or fairy-tale incidents figure in the chronological sequence of its record, and also to provide the English student with such a full list of works as may enable a fairly exhaustive study of this branch of human fancy and thought.—ALFRED NUTT.]

Märchen, or fairy tales proper (as distinguished from tales about fairies which are included under *sagas*), come before us for the first time in **Egyptian papyri** of the twelfth to nineteenth Dynasties (twenty-eighth to thirteenth century B.C.). These have been translated into French by M. Maspéro (*Contes Populaires de l'Égypte Ancienne*, Paris, 1882), into English by Prof. Flinders-Petrie and Mr. F. Ll. Griffith (*Egyptian Tales translated from the Papyri*, 2 vols., London, 1895). Fairy tale themes and incidents appear in old Babylonian literature of uncertain date, but undoubtedly older than the second millennium B.C., notably in the saga of **Sargon**, said to have reigned in the fourth millennium B.C., and the mythological literature describing

the Creation, Deluge, and the Exploits of Gilgames, whence the Hebrews derived their own mythical Creation literature and the Samson saga.

Similar themes and incidents abound in early Greek mythology and heroic legend, the earliest witness being the *Homeric Poems*, dating in their extant form from 1000 to 800 B.C. The earliest Indian mythological literature being almost exclusively ritual, yields little in this line, but the secondary stage, represented by the *Brahmanas* and the two epics (*Mahābhārata* and *Ramayana*), and dating roughly from 600 B.C. to A.D., is rich in folktale themes (the Indian epics are accessible to the English reader in Mr. R. C. Dutt's abridged versions, London, 1898-99). A rich folktale literature of great antiquity is vouched for in India by the *Jataka* collection (now being rendered into English under the direction of Prof. Cowell, vols. i.-iii., Cambridge, 1895-96), which seems to have assumed substantially its present form not later than 100 B.C.

For fifth century B.C. Egypt we have the *Master-Thief*, narrated by Herodotus, which remained, until the discovery of the earlier Egyptian *Märchen*, the earliest recorded folktale in the world's literature. In fifth to fourth century B.C. Greece we have the mythological literature of the dramatists, and the systematic mythologists of a somewhat later period (Apollodorus), rich in folktale themes and incidents. The *Æsopic fable* collection also goes back to this period (cf. Jos. Jacobs, *The Fables of Æsop*, 2 vols., London, 1890).

Roman literature is singularly poor as far as folktales are concerned, though Livy in his version of Roman mythical history has preserved a few themes (e.g. Romulus and Remus, the Brutus story, &c.). But the Romans, as a rule, were content with re-telling Greek stories (e.g. Virgil, Ovid), thereby exercising a considerable influence upon mediæval story-telling, which drew chiefly from Latin and not from Greek sources.

The third century A.D. Latin writer Apuleius has preserved the masterpiece of classic fairy tale in his *Cupid and Psyche*, an episode of the *Metamorphoses* (or the *Golden Ass*, as it is generally known in English), a work containing many other folktale themes and *motifs* (cf. A. Lang, *Cupid and Psyche*, London, 1887). Greek

writers of the second to fourth centuries A.D., notably Lucian in his **True History** (English version by Willson, London, 1899), and the novelists yield incidents and scenes analogous to those met with in fairy tales (*cf.* Rohde, *Der Griechische Roman*, Leipzig, 1876).

In India collections of tales which later crystallised into the **Panchatantra** (German translation, with elaborate commentary, by Benfey, 2 vols., Leipzig, 1859), its imitation the **Hitopadesa** (French version by Lancereau, Paris, 1882), and into the group of narratives comprised under the title of the **Seven Sages**, must have been in existence not later than the fourth century A.D. (*cf.* Jos. Jacobs, *The Fables of Bidpai*, London, 1888). The most extensive Indian collection, the **Katha Sarit Sāgara**, belongs, as such, to the twelfth century, but is made up of much older material (English version by Dr. Tawney, 2 vols., Calcutta, 1880-84). The Indian collections became known to and were imitated by Persians, Arabs, Syrians, and Greeks in the sixth to tenth centuries, and certainly contributed their share to the great Arab collection, the **Thousand and One Nights**, which assumed the form under which it has come down to us between 1200 and 1500 A.D. (the best English translation for the folk-lorist is that of Sir Richard Burton, 16 vols., London, N.D., but published 1886-89; a complete French version is now being published, of which vols. i.-vii. have appeared).

The mythico-heroic literature of the Barbarians, whose conquest of and assimilation to the Roman Empire resulted in mediæval-modern Europe, is as rich in folktale themes and traits as is that of the Greeks or Indians. The oldest and purest (*i.e.* least affected by Græco-Roman civilisation) is that of the **Irish Celts**, dating, in the form under which it has come down to us, from 500 to 1000 A.D. (*cf.* Nos. 1 and 3 of this series; also *The Voyage of Bran*, by K. Meyer and A. Nutt, 2 vols., 1895-97; and *The Cuchullin Saga*, by E. Hull, 1898). The **Continental Teutons**, including among them the Anglo-Saxon settlers in the British Isles, have valuable mythico-heroic fragments of the seventh to tenth centuries (*cf.* *Beowulf*, modern English versions by B. Thorpe, Oxford, 1855, and J. L. Hale, Boston, 1893; also Stopford Brooke's *Early English Literature*, 1892). The **Northern Teutons** have bequeathed

us what is unquestionably the noblest mythology, and the richest in folktale themes, outside that of Greece, in their mythico-heroic narratives in verse and prose, dating, in the form under which they have come down to us, from the tenth to the thirteenth century, and largely vouched for as to substance by testimonies of the ninth century (the standard English work on this literature is Vigfusson and Powell's *Corpus Poeticum Boreale*, 2 vols., Oxford, 1883; cf. also Anderson's translation of the *Prose or Younger Edda*, Chicago, 1880).

With the exception of *Beowulf*, the earliest handling on an extensive scale of Teutonic heroico-mythic material is in Latin, the *Waltharius* of Ekkehard of St. Gall, who died in 975 (accessible in the German version of Althof, 1896). A somewhat later Latin poem, *Ruodlieb*, by an unknown German writer, *circa* 1030-1040 (edited by Seiler, Halle, 1882), is of great interest as being the oldest example of the knightly romance which flourished so luxuriantly in the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries, and the subject-matter of which has such marked analogies with the fairy tale.

In France a rich heroic romance grew up, partly in Latin, partly in the vernacular, during the tenth to twelfth centuries, centring around Charles the Great (814). In its earlier and purer stage (*i.e.* pre-1150), this romance contains very little folktale material, infinitely less than the Celtic or Teutonic literature already noticed.

The Norman conquest of England was of immense importance in the evolution of romantic literature (*cf.* No. 1 of this series). The **Welsh Celts** seem to have been stimulated to record their own mythical tales, which are exceedingly rich in folktale traits, scenes, and incidents, and one of which, *Kulhwch and Olwen*, is one of the finest fairy tales in all literature (English translation [1849] by Lady Guest, *The Mabinogion*, London, 1877). Celtic mythic tales generally became accessible to, and were assimilated by, the leading literature of the time, that of France; the French **Arthurian romance** took rise; the French **Charlemagne romance** was transformed in imitation; by virtue of the same impulse a vast body of German heroic saga in knightly guise came into existence (*Nibelungenlied*, the *Dietrich poems*, &c.), all more or less affected by the

French Arthurian romance. All this literature, Celtic, Celto-French and Celto-English, Franco-German and pure German, betrays the most marked affinities with the fairy tale familiar to us ; but, as a rule, the affinities are of such a nature as to pre-suppose an existing fairy tale, rather than to countenance the derivation of the latter from the romances.

Simultaneously with this great outburst of romance, which was mainly the result of contact in England between Celtic and Teutonic mythic saga on the one hand, and the French literary instinct on the other, a wave of **Eastern influence** overran West Europe, partly from the Moorish kingdom of Spain, partly from the direct contact between Christians and Saracens due to the Crusades, mainly through the increased intercourse between Western Europe and the Byzantine Empire. The stories which thus demonstrably came to West Europe are, however, rather of an edifying or humorous than of a fairy tale, and are best represented by the great thirteenth-century collection, the *Gesta Romanorum* (Mediæval English version, edited by S. J. H. Herbage, Early English Text Society, 1879 ; modern English version in the Bohn Library, 1876), although this contains many genuine *Märchen*. More definitely Oriental are the **Seven Sages** groups of tales (cf. Wright's edition of the old English metrical version, Percy Society, 1845). Oriental influence is also marked in such mediæval collections (largely used for pulpit purposes) of edifying anecdotes as *Jacques de Vitry's Exempla* (edited by Prof. Crane, Folk-Lore Society, 1890), and, though to a much less extent, in the by no means edifying metrical narratives known as *Fabliaux*, of which a vast number were produced in France from about 1160 to the end of the thirteenth century (the fullest collection is that of Montaiglon and Raynaud, 6 vols., Paris, 1872-90 ; cf. M. Bédier's masterly monograph, *Les Fabliaux*, Paris, 1896).

Contemporaneous with and partly a manifestation of the same spirit as the *fabliaux*, is the mediæval French beast epic of *Renard*, the earliest forms of which, in Latin, go back to the eleventh century, but which, in its existing shape (1180-1250), has admitted Oriental material (cf. M. L. Sudre's monograph, *Le Roman de Renart*, Paris, 1892 ; Prof. Arber has reprinted the

earliest printed English version, and Mr. Jos. Jacobs is preparing an edition of the same, with a history of the cycle). The French fabliau passed away and was succeeded by the Italian novella, which is in prose instead of in verse, and which mingles tragedy and melodrama with farce much more than the fabliau. The most famous collection of novelle is the *Decameron* of Boccaccio. Nearly all the novelle, of which Italy produced a vast mass in the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries, contain a certain amount of folktale material; but in the *Placevoli Notte* of Straparola (1560) we have this element represented so largely that it may be called the earliest collection of fairy tales in European literature (accessible in the sixteenth-century French translation, reprinted, 2 vols., Paris, 1857). Some eighty years later (1634-36) appeared the *Pentamerone* of Basile, which is not only entirely made up of fairy tales, but of tales which undoubtedly were mainly based upon oral recitation and not upon books (Select English version by Taylor, London, 1848). Meanwhile it should be noticed that sixteenth to seventeenth century literature in England (Shakespeare and the dramatists, Drayton, Herrick, Milton, &c.), in Germany (Hans Sachs, Ayser, Fischart), in France (Rabelais, Noel du Fail), reveals knowledge of many folktale themes and characters (*cf.* No. 6 of this Series).

Perrault's French collection, partly derived from the oral recitation of his son's nurse, *Contes de ma Mère l'Oye* (1694-97), made the fairy tale fashionable; he was followed by Madame d'Aulnoy (1708) and others. Translations from these collections and from the *Arabian Nights*, made known to Europe by Galland, 1704-1717, with a few native English stories extant in miserable chapbook versions, formed the bulk of fairy tale books published in this country throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. At the close of the eighteenth century, Musäus (1782) did for Germany what Perrault and his followers had done for France; like them, he arranged and prettified or moralised his tales. The first attempt to give the folktale in its native simplicity and charm, in a genuine form and without making it a subject of literary art, was that of Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm in their immortal *Kinder- und Haus-Märchen* (1819), originating as it did that

reverent and loving study of folk-literature which has been one of the most characteristic developments of the nineteenth century.

In the following paragraphs I do not propose to give a complete list of folktale collections published in this century, but merely to indicate the more important and representative ones, and in especial such as have appeared in an English version. The dates given are that of first issue.¹

BRITISH ISLES.—**Crofton Croker**, *Fairy Legends and Traditions of the South of Ireland*, 3 vols., 1825-28; **Chambers**, *Popular Rhymes of Scotland*, 1841; **Halliwel**, *Popular Rhymes and Nursery Tales*, 1849; **Campbell**, *Popular Tales of the West Highlands*, 4 vols., 1860-62; **Kennedy**, *Legendary Fictions of the Irish Celts*, 1866; **Henderson**, *Folk-Lore of the Northern Counties*, 1866; **Larminie**, *West Irish Folk-Tales*, 1893; **Curtin**, *Myths and Folk-Lore of Ireland*, 1890, *Hero Tales of Ireland*, 1894.

GERMANY.—**Bechstein**, *Deutsches Märchenbuch*, 1845; **Müllenhoff**, *Sagen, Märchen, etc. aus Schleswig-Holstein*, 1845; **Wolf**, *Deutsche Märchen, &c.*, 1845; **Kuhn und Schwartz**, *Norddeutsche Sagen, Märchen, &c.*, 1848; **Wolf**, *Deutsche Hausmärchen*, 1851; **Zingerle**, *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, 1852-54; **Meier**, *Volksmärchen aus Schwaben*, 1852; **Haltrich**, *Volksmärchen aus Siebenbürgen*, 1856; **Vernaleken**, *Mythen und Bräuche der Völker in Oesterreich*, Vienna, 1859; **Sutermeister**, *Kinder- und Hausmärchen aus der Schweiz*, 1873; **Bartsch**, *Sagen und Märchen aus Mecklenburg*, 2 vols., 1879-80; **Jahn**, *Volksmärchen aus Pommern*, 1891.

SCANDINAVIA.—**Asbjørnsen og Moe**, *Norske Folkeeventyr*, 1843-48; ditto, *Ny Samling*, 1872 (first series translated by Dasent, 1858; second series translated by Dasent, 1874; Braekstad, 1896); **Cavallius und Stephens**, *Schwedische Volkssagen und Märchen*, 1848; **Arnason**, *Islenzkar Aefintyri*, 1864 (translated by Magnusson and Powell, 2 series, 1864-68).

ITALY.—**Gonzenbach**, *Sicilianische Märchen*, 2 vols., 1870; **Pitré**, *Fiabe Novelle e racconti Popolari Siciliani*,

¹ A fairly complete list of folktale collections to date of issue (1883) will be found in *Folk-Lore Journal*, vol. i. pp. 43-50.

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4 vols., 1875; **Imbriani**, *La Novellaja Florentina*, 1871; **Crane**, *Italian Folk-Tales* (a translation, with notes, of a selection from the foregoing and other collections), 1885.

SPAIN.—**Caballero**, *The Bird of Truth*, and other fairy tales, translated by J. H. Ingram, 1881; **Maspons y Labrés**, *Lo Rondallayre*, Barcelona, 1871; **Alcover**, *Aplech de Rondayes Mallorquines*, 3 vols., issued Ciutat de Mallorca, 1896-97-98.

PORTUGAL.—**Pedroso**, *Portuguese Folk-Tales*, translated by H. Monteiro, 1870 (Folk-Lore Society Publications, No. IX.); **Coelho**, *Contos Populares Portuguezes*, Lisbon, 1879; **De Vasconcellos**, *Tradições Populares de Portugal*, Porto, 1882; **Braga**, *Contos Tradicionaes do Povo Portuguez*, 2 vols., Porto, N.D.

FRANCE.—**Sebillot**, *Contes Populaires de la Haute-Bretagne*, 3 vols., 1880-82. **Cosquin**, *Contes Populaires de Lorraine*, 2 vols., 1886; **Bladé**, *Contes Populaires de la Gascogne*, 3 vols., 1886; **Luzel**, *Contes Populaires de la Basse-Bretagne*, 3 vols., 1887.

SLAVDOM.—**Naaké**, *Slavonic Fairy Tales*, 1874; **Wratislaw**, *Sixty Folk-Tales from exclusively Slavonic sources*, 1889. (a) **SLAVONIC BOHEMIA**.—**Wenzig**, *Westslavischer Märchenschatz*, 1857. (b) **WENDLAND**.—Haupt und Schmalzer, *Volkslieder und Märchen der Wenden*, 2 vols., 1841. (c) **POLAND**.—**Godin**, *Polnische Märchen* (translated from Glinski's collection, 1862), Leipzig, 1878. (d) **RUSSIA**.—**Ralston**, *Russian Folk-Tales* 1873 (chiefly from the collections of Afanasief, 1860-63, and Khudyakof, 1850; **Bain**, *Russian Fairy Tales*, 1892, translated from Polevoi's collection; *Cossack Fairy Tales*, 1894. (e) **SERBIA**.—**Karadschitsch**, *Volksmärchen der Serben*, Berlin, 1854 (many of these have been translated by Madame Mijatovics and published under the title of *Serbian Folk-Lore*, 1874); **Krauss**, *Sagen und Märchen der Sudslaven*, 2 vols., Leipzig, 1883-84.

LITHUANIA.—**Schleicher**, *Litauische Märchen*, Weimar, 1857; **Leskien und Brugmann**, *Litauische Volkslieder und Märchen*, Strassburg, 1882.

FIN-UND ESTHLAND.—**Kreuzwald**, *Esthnische Märchen*, 1889; **Jannsen**, *Märchen und Sagen des Esthnischen Volkes*, 2 series, Dorpat, 1881-88; **Schreck**, *Finnische Märchen*, Weimar, 1887; **Kirby**, *The Hero of Esthonia*, 2 vols., 1895 (cf. No. 5 of present series).

HUNGARY.—**Jones und Kropf**, The Folk-Tales of the Magyar (translated from Kriza, Erdelyi, Pap, and others), 1889 (Folk-Lore Society Publications, No. XIII.).

GIPSYDOM.—**Von Wlislöcki**, Märchen und Sagen der Transsilvanischen Zigeuner, Berlin, 1886; **Groome**, Gypsy Folk-Tales, 1899.

ALBANIA.—**Hahn**, Griechische und Albanesische Märchen, Leipzig, 1864; **Dozon**, Contes Albanais, 1881.

ROUMANIA.—**Schott**, Walachische Märchen, Stuttgart, 1845.

MODERN GREECE.—**Schmidt**, Griechische Märchen, Leipzig, 1877; **Legrand**, Contes Populaires Grecs, 1881; **Garnett**, Greek Folk-Poesy, 2 vols, 1896 (Vol. I., Ballads; Vol. II., Prose Tales).

NORTHERN (MOHAMMEDAN) AFRICA.—**De Rochemonteix**, Quelques Contes Nubiens, Cairo, 1888; **Stumme**, Tunisische Märchen und Gedichte, 2 vols., Leipzig, 1893; Märchen der Schluf von Tazerwalt, Leipzig, 1895; Märchen und Gedichte aus der Stadt Tripolis, Leipzig, 1898.

MODERN INDIA.—**Frere**, Old Deccan Days, 1866; **Stokes**, Indian Fairy Tales, 1880; **Steele and Temple**, Wide-Awake Stories, 1884; **Knowles**, Folk-Tales of Kashmir, 1888.

TIBET.—**Schiefner**, Tibetan Tales, 1882.

MONGOLIA.—**Jülg**, Mongolische Märchen, 1867.

CHINA.—**Dennys**, The Folk-Lore of China, 1876 (contains many folktales); **Giles**, Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio, 2 vols., 1880, selected and translated from a Chinese collection.

JAPAN.—**Mitford**, Tales of Old Japan, 2 vols., 1871; **Von Langeegg**, Japanische Thee-Geschichten, Vienna, 1884; **Brauns**, Japanische Märchen und Sagen, 1885.

COREA.—**Allen**, Korean Tales, 1889; **Arnous**, Korea: Märchen und Legenden, &c., Leipzig, N.D.

FURTHER INDIA.—**Landes**, Contes et Légendes Annamites, 1886, Contes Tjames, 1887; **Des Michels**, Contes Plaisants Annamites, 1888; **Leclère**, Cambodge: Contes et Légendes, 1895.

The foregoing material may be said in a measure to belong to a common folklore fund, the internal relations, actions, and reactions of which can in a large degree be determined historically.

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Folktale themes and incidents occur likewise alike in sagas and *Märchen* in America, Africa (Central and Southern), and Polynesia.

AMERICA.—The mythic and heroic sagas of the Peruvians, in so far as they were preserved by the Spanish conquerors, may be found in *Markham's Rites and Laws of the Incas*, 1872; *cf.* also *Brinton's Hero Tales of America*, 1882. Their folktale character is very marked. The Maya-speaking tribes of CENTRAL AMERICA have preserved a very interesting mythico-heroic history, the *Popol Vuh* (French version by Brasseur de Bourbourg, 1861), which is full of folklore material. The heroic traditions of MEXICO may be best found in *Brinton's Hero Tales*. The Indians of NORTH AMERICA (the present United States and British America) are richly provided with sagas and *Märchen*; in some cases, *e.g.* the tribes of Canada and New England, a certain amount of European influence is noticeable, but the genuine character of the majority is vouched for by testimonies reaching from the Jesuit missionaries (end of sixteenth to eighteenth century) to the scientific investigators of the present century. The most valuable collections are:—*Dorsey, The Cegiha Language*, Washington, 1890; *Boas, Chinook Texts*, Washington, 1894; *Indianische Sagen von der Nord-Pacifischen Küste Amerikas*, Berlin, 1895; *Grinnell, Pawnee Hero-Stories and Folk-Tales*, New York, 1889; *Blackfoot Lodge Tales*, 1893; *Matthews, Navaho Legends*, Boston, 1897; *Teit, Traditions of the Thompson River Indians of British Columbia*, Boston, 1898 (*Memoirs of the American Folk-Lore Society*, vols. v. and vi.).

The NEGROES of North America and the West Indies have a rich store of tales, chiefly of the animal kind. In North America the hero is mostly the rabbit, and Mr. Harris has made these tales popular by his admirable re-telling: *Brer Rabbit*, 1880. Many of the negro tales show traces of influence from the allied European stories of the Reynard type, and from the mythological stories of the North American Indians relating to the coyote and other animals, but the bulk of this material was undoubtedly brought from Africa by the ancestors of the present negro population. The West Indian negroes have preserved a purer form, their mythical hero being the spider (*Ananci*), whence the name: *Ananci Stories*.

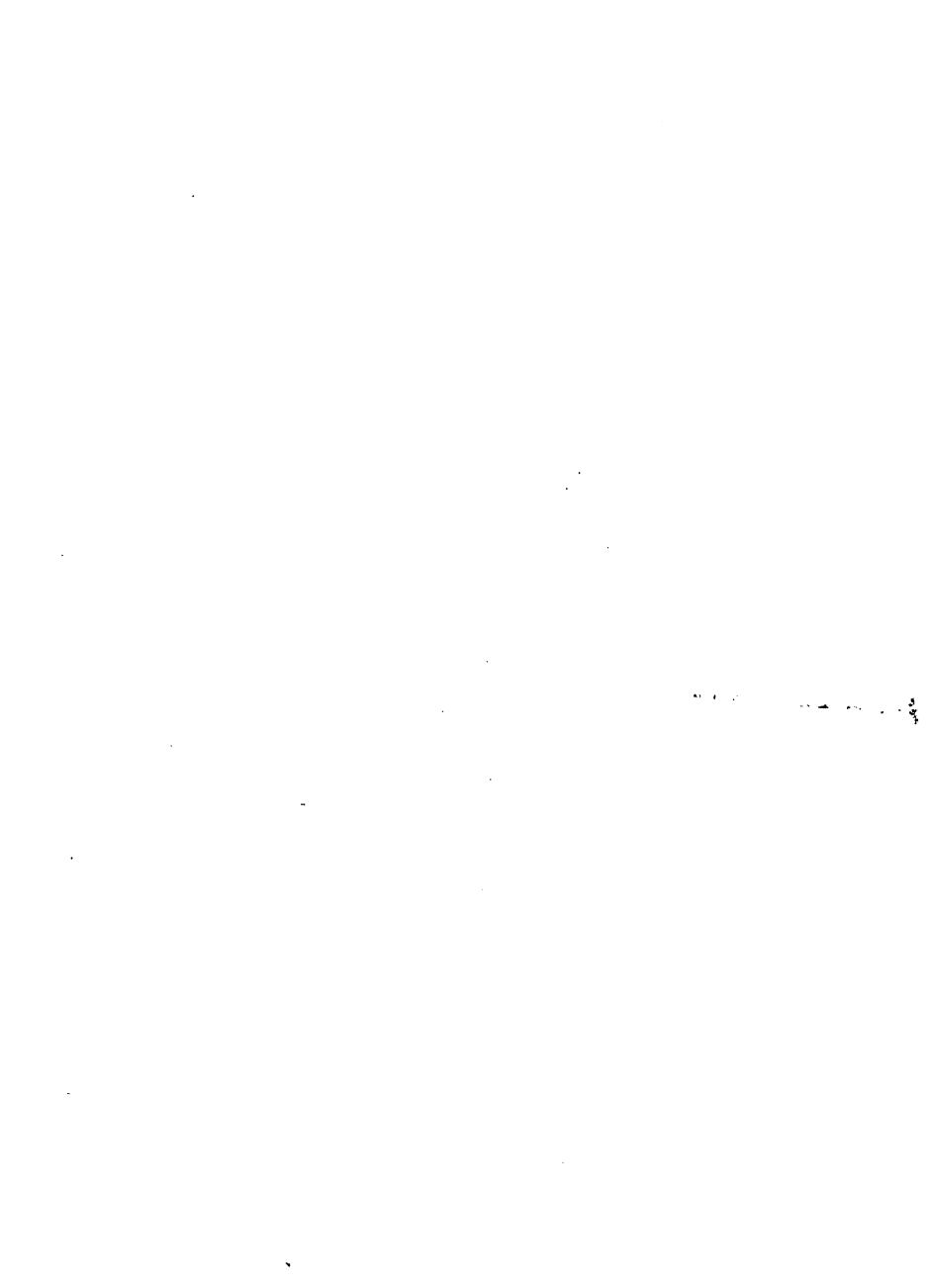
AFRICA.—**Steere**, Swahili Tales, as told by the natives of Zanzibar, 1870 (many of these stories were derived from Arab channels); **Callaway**, Nursery Tales, Traditions, and Histories of the Zulus, 1868; **Casalis**, The Basutos, 1861 (a translation from a French work under the same title which had appeared shortly before; it contains a number of tales); **Bleek**, Reynard the Fox in South Africa, 1864; **Theal**, Kaffir Folk-Lore, N.D. (1882); Folk-Lore Journal, edited by the Working Committee of the South African Folk-Lore Society, 2 vols., 1879-80; **Chatelain**, Folktales of Angola, Boston, 1894 (Memoirs of the American Folk-Lore Society, vol. i.); **Junod**, Les Chants et les Contes des Ba-Ronga, Lausanne, N.D. (1898).

POLYNESIA.—**Grey**, Polynesian Mythology, 1855; **Taylor**, New Zealand and its Inhabitants, 1870 (contains much information on the mythology and many tales); **Gill**, Myths and Songs from the South Pacific, 1876; **White**, The Ancient History of the Maori, his Mythology and Traditions, 6 vols., Wellington, N.Z., 1887-90.

AUSTRALIA.—**Parker**, Australian Legendary Tales, 2 series, 1896-98.

MELANESIA.—**Codrington**, The Melanesians: Studies in their Anthropology and Folk-Lore, 1891 (contains a number of tales).

The facts which emerge from a broad survey of folk-tale material as recorded in literature are as follows: This material is found everywhere as forming part of what every race believes to be the oldest account of its origins and earliest history; worked up into the form of *Märchen*, it belongs to the very earliest recorded examples of literature; it is found everywhere among the backward races, or among the backward classes of the civilised races; in proportion as civilisation advances it tends to disappear altogether or to be greatly modified.



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